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Kenneth S. Johnson
Oklahoma Geological Survey

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DR. CHARLES J. MANKIN, 1932-2012



IN MEMORIUM

DR. CHARLES J. MANKIN, 1932-2012

Past National Secretary-Treasurer of Sigma Gamma Epsilon

The Society of Sigma Gamma Epsilon (SGE), and the geologic community, lost a gentleman, a true friend, and an advocate with the death of Dr. Charles J. “Charlie” Mankin on November 13, 2012. He died peacefully at his home in Norman, Oklahoma after 80 years of a fulfilling life. He is survived by his wife, Betty Bellis Mankin; his three daughters, Sally Geyer, Helen Volak, and Laura Veal; Betty’s children, Doug Bellis and Karen Powers (both are geologists); and six grandchildren.

Charlie was born in Dallas, Texas, on January 15, 1932. His parents, Green and Myla Mankin, moved to Stony, Texas, about 40 miles north of Fort Worth, where he attended grades 1–3 in a 2-room school house. His parents then purchased and moved to the family ranch near Ozona, in West Texas, where he learned the lessons and benefits of hard work. He often spoke fondly of digging post holes in rocky ground and stringing 22 miles of 3-strand barbed wire along with the ranch hands. Maybe his living in “Stony,” and his early digging into rocks near Ozona, helped guide him into the field of geology?

He attended the University of New Mexico (UNM), earning a starting position on the basketball team as a walk-on. An injury caused him to drop basketball, leave UNM, and enroll at the University of Texas (UT) in Austin. Charlie had some excellent mentors: at UNM, Sherman Wengard sparked his interest and got him “turned on” to the study of geology, and at UT-Austin he studied under Robert Folk, Ronald DeFord, and Bill Muehlberger, among others. He received his B.S., M.A., and Ph.D. in Geology at UT-Austin, in 1954, 1955, and 1958, respectively, and then did a Post-Doctoral Fellowship at California Institute of Technology in 1958-59. While at Caltech he was privileged to attend lectures and luncheons at the famed Athenaeum Round Table with the likes of Linus Pauling (Nobel Prize in Chemistry, 1954, and Nobel Peace Prize, 1962) and other outstanding people.

In spite of growing up and receiving his education in Texas, Charlie ventured north of the Red River at The University of Oklahoma (OU) in Norman. He arrived as an Assistant Professor in 1959, and quickly rose through the ranks. He became an Associate Professor and Director of the School of Geology and Geophysics in 1963 (Director until 1977); full Professor in 1964; and was appointed Director of the Oklahoma Geological Survey (OGS) at OU in 1967, a position he held until he retired from OU in 2007. He had an excellent academic and administrative career, but that was only part of his life.

Charlie was never satisfied with just a single job or position. Most of the time he had two full-time jobs at OU, and at the same time he served on, or chaired, more than 100 State or National boards, commissions, councils, and committees. His full-time administrative jobs at OU were: Director, School of Geology and Geophysics (1963–1977); Director, Oklahoma Geological Survey (1967–2007); Executive Director, Energy Resources Institute (1978–1987); and Director, Sarkeys Energy Center (2000–2006). He managed all these responsibilities effectively, and with a minimum of sleep. Charlie showed up at the office about 7:00 each

morning, worked till about 9:00 in the evening, had dinner about 10:00 pm, and would finally sleep from about 2:00–6:00 am: a tough schedule for anyone to maintain.

Charlie served as Director of the Oklahoma Geological Survey under eight Oklahoma governors, from Dewey Bartlett to Brad Henry, and his 40 years in that position made him the longest-serving State Geologist in the history of all State Surveys. Under Governors David Boren and David Hall, he served on several committees and commissions dealing with petroleum and energy resources of Oklahoma. During the presidencies of Ronald Reagan and George H. W. Bush, he was appointed to three Federal commissions assessing the Nation's energy resources and royalty-management problems.

The Society of Sigma Gamma Epsilon (SGE) was always dear to Charlie and he was dedicated to helping geology students succeed in their role as future geologists. He served as the National Secretary-Treasurer of SGE for 42 years, from 1967–2009. He was able to carry it out for so long only because his wife, Betty (Betty Bellis—later, Betty Mankin), maintained all the records and correspondence, and was the backbone of the service he provided to the Nation's brightest geology students. Betty carried out this work as the Secretary to the National Council of SGE. As Past-President Dr. Richard L. Ford said: "Charlie and Betty would be the collective face of the Society at the national level, a remarkable feat of professional volunteerism, especially considering Charlie was initially asked to serve on a "temporary" basis" (*The Compass*: v. 84(1), 2012).

During his (their) tenure as National Secretary-Treasurer of SGE, the number of active chapters in the Society rose from 27, in 1967, to more than 120 in 2009. In addition, Charlie and Betty took on the responsibility of printing, publishing, and distributing *The Compass* (the Earth-Science Journal of SGE) from 1970–2009. Charlie and Betty assisted with the organization and planning of every biennial convention of SGE during the 42 years of their involvement with the Society. Of course, they attended those conventions as well and were instrumental in making these undertakings successful events. With Charlie's excellent speaking abilities and his knowledge of the energy field and geosciences in general, he would provide inspirational presentations to students and attendees of the conventions. Charlie and Betty also set up and staffed an SGE booth every year at the national meetings of both the Geological Society of America and the American Association of Petroleum Geologists, and, in this way, they could continually meet with students and working geologists that had a tie with SGE, and seek new members for the Society. For all his service to SGE, Charlie was awarded Honorary Membership, and in 2007, both Charlie and Betty were presented special Outstanding Service Awards in recognition of 42 years of work on behalf of SGE. The growth and success of SGE over the years is largely the result of the dedication and never tiring efforts of Charlie and Betty.

Charlie was also active in guiding students at his own university. As a Professor at OU, he directed the research of about 40 M.S. and Ph.D. students, all of whom went on to productive careers in geology or related fields.

The National Academy of Sciences (NAS) called upon Charlie's expertise many times. He chaired, or served on, nine NAS boards or commissions dealing with oil and natural gas, energy resources, mineral resources, geologic mapping, scientific drilling, and public policy. His

work on these boards and commissions, and other national commitments, required numerous trips to Washington, DC, but still he carried out his obligations to OU, OGS, the state of Oklahoma, and SGE.

Charlie's contributions to the various geological societies and to the field of geosciences were recognized with numerous awards and honors, including:

- Rocky Mountain Federation—Distinguished Achievement Award, 1972
- Daughters of the American Revolution—National Medal of Honor, 1983
- U.S. Department of the Interior—Conservation Service Award, 1983
- Oklahoma State University—Honorary Professor of Geology, 1987
- American Geological Institute—Ian Campbell Memorial Medal, 1987
- American Association of Petroleum Geologists—Public Service Award, 1988
- American Institute of Professional Geologists—Martin van Couvering Memorial Award, 1988
- Oklahoma City Geological Society—Honorary Life Member, 1994
- American Institute of Professional Geologists—Honorary Life Member, 1995
- American Institute of Professional Geologists—Ben H. Parker Memorial Medal, 1999
- American Association of Petroleum Geologists—Honorary Life Member, 2000
- International Association of Energy Advocates—Recipient of Energy Advocate of the Year for 2000
- University of Oklahoma Board of Regents—Regents' Professor, 2006
- Induction into the Oklahoma Higher Education Hall of Fame, 2007
- Association of American State Geologists—Distinguished Service Award, 2007
- Association of American State Geologists—Honorary Life Member, 2007
- Sigma Gamma Epsilon—Outstanding Service Award, 2007
- Association of American State Geologists—Lifetime Achievement Award, 2008
- Association of American State Geologists—Established the Dr. Charles Mankin Annual Award for the best State Geologic Map proposal submitted for the National Cooperative Geologic Mapping Act grant, 2012

One of Charlie's signature Association of American State Geologists (AASG) achievements (which was beneficial to all State Geological Surveys, to the US Geological Survey (USGS), and to the Nation as a whole) was his championing and spearheading passage of the National Geologic Mapping Act by the US Congress. His knowledge of the ins and outs of Congress and the Federal bureaucracy, and his close relationship with the USGS and most of the national geological societies and associations, enabled him to show the value of basic geologic mapping and to encourage and foster passage of the Act by Congress in 1992 (Public Law 102-285, 102nd

Congress), and reauthorization of the Act in subsequent years. The cooperative efforts of both the AASG and the USGS were critical to implementing this Act. All State Geological Surveys and the general public have benefitted from his efforts, because geologic maps are the foundation for almost all geologic studies, including mineral resources, ground-water resources, and a wide range of environmental problems.

Charlie had a large output of articles and abstracts released in Oklahoma, national, and international publications. In all, he authored or co-authored more than 70 articles and abstracts on a wide variety of subjects. Most of his publications dealt with petroleum and other energy/mineral resources, including reserves, policy matters, technology transfer, and environmental issues. Charlie also co-authored a number of articles on clay mineralogy, clay petrography, and clay geochemistry with some of the many graduate students he had supervised at OU. Other publications covered geologic education (training of future geologists) and the value and uses of geologic maps. He was the coordinator for the “Texas-Oklahoma Tectonic Region” chart, which shows the correlation of stratigraphic units in Texas and Oklahoma for the AAPG-sponsored COSUNA Project.

I was privileged to know Charlie during his entire 53 years in Oklahoma. He was my boss at the OGS for 33 years, and I served as his Associate Director for 22 years. During all that time, Charlie reached out to help and serve his students, his staff, his State, his Nation, many professional societies, and the geoscience community. At his induction into the Oklahoma Higher Education Hall of Fame, Charlie was called “an enrichment to the State and the Nation.” That quite accurately sums up Charlie’s life as a spokesman for the geologic community to his State and his Nation. We will all miss him—his lifetime contributions mean that we, and future generations, will benefit greatly from his having passed this way.

Kenneth S. Johnson
Emeritus, Oklahoma Geological Survey
Norman, Oklahoma